

YOUNG-NALL HOUSE
County Highway 40
Burkville vicinity
Lowndes County
Alabama

HABS No. A1-886

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Southeast Region
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

YOUNG-NALL HOUSE HABS NO.AL-886

Location: The Young-Nall House is located 2.7 km south of County Highway 40 on the east side of Lake Berry Road in Lowndes County, Alabama.

Present Owner: General Electric - Montgomery Project
Lowndes County Road 40, Route 1, Box 9-D
Burkville, Alabama 36725

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Most Recent Use: Residence

Significance: The Young-Nall House is a one-story frame house built ca. 1825 in northeast Lowndes County. It was the center of a large 19th century plantation complex and has been in the possession of the original family to the present. The house and several outbuildings remain intact and still exhibit their original architectural character.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1825. Although John Nall did not receive a land patent until 1824, Mrs. Beri Barfield, a recent owner and descendant, claims that he was living on the land prior to officially owning it. Mrs. Barfield states that the house was built in the early 1820s and that John Nall certainly occupied the house by 1825. The original interior woodwork is also of this period and corroborates the early date claimed for the house.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The chain of ownership for all properties in the Burkville Multiple Resource Area is incomplete due to incomplete county records. The following is the most complete chronological progression possible according to identifiable deed and will records. Reference is to the Clerk's office in the Lowndes County Courthouse in Hayneville, Alabama.

1824 Land patent recorded July 9, 1824
Granted to John Nall

- 1825 Land patent 1606, Vol. 6, page 213,
 recorded April 9, 1825.
 Patent of 84 acres granted to John Nall.
- 1877 Deed May 15, 1877, Book L, page 9.
 Elizabeth Nall
 to
 Mary Young
- 1884 Will September 23, 1884
 Mary Young
 to
 William B. Young
- 1921 Will April 20, 1921
 William B. Young
 to
 Beri Young Barfield
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: No information
 located.
5. Original plans and construction: No information
 located.
6. Alterations and additions: The Young-Nall House was
 constructed in a series of building campaigns. The
 initial house section is the middle gable roof
 structure. To this was added the front (west)
 hipped roof section of rooms. A small gable and
 shed roofed addition was added to the rear (east) of
 the original section of the house in the 20th
 century. After 1973 substantial interior remodel-
 ling resulted in the removal of original interior
 finishes in the west section, as well as the
 addition of bathrooms and a kitchen.

B. Historical Context:

During the early 1820s John Nall moved from North Carolina to Alabama to take possession of land grants obtained from the Federal government. Nall received grants to substantial acreage in 1824 and 1825 and he constructed the original portion of the one-story house which remains extant. Nall became a prominent planter and raised cotton, corn and rice on the plantation surrounding the house. The 1830 census lists John Nall as having a family of ten and Nall is listed in the 1840s as serving as a notary public in Lowndes County.

In 1851 Nall's niece, Mary Harrison, married Brooks Young and together they managed the plantation for Nall until his death in 1863. In the third quarter of the 19th

century the Nall plantation was of above average size although not as large as the adjacent Stone and McQueen properties. In 1855 B. W. Young is listed as owning seven slaves which was less than the average of twelve found in Lowndes County. During the Civil War John Nall died with his estate valued at almost \$27,000 including land, slaves and agricultural products. The estate is also listed as including a grist mill located on a nearby branch of Tallawasee Creek.

Like many other estates the Young-Nall farm appears to have suffered as a result of the Civil War. By 1871 Elizabeth Nall and the Youngs were forced to sell part of their land to pay debts. The Lowndes County Court ordered a sale of the Nall property, a description of which was advertised in the Hayneville Examiner. Over two hundred fifty acres were sold to area farmers but sixty acres were purchased by B. W. Young, and the house and adjacent property remained in the possession of Mrs. Nall. The following year Mrs. Nall died and the estate passed to B. W. Young.

Upon Mrs. Nall's death the house and adjacent property have remained in the hands of the Young family until recent years. William B. Young inherited the property and in the early 1900s made alterations to the house consisting of moving the kitchen closer to the house and enclosing the covered walkway in between. Cotton production was gradually phased out and the land was used for pasturage and grain crops. After William Young's death in 1921 his wife stopped farming the land and rented it out to tenants. In 1934 the adjacent creek was impounded to create Berry Lake which served as a local fishing and recreation center for many years. The house itself remained vacant for over thirty years until the Barfields moved back to the house in 1973. The Barfields spent several years rehabilitating the house for modern use. Despite alterations to the house it still displays its original architectural character.

The Young-Nall family cemetery is an important element of the site and is located south of the house site. Its use spans a century with recorded burial dates listed between 1854 and 1960. There are fifteen marked graves in the cemetery, all of which belong to members of either the Nall or Young families. Among those buried in the cemetery are John and Elizabeth Nall, B.W. and Mary Young, and William Berry Young. In addition to this cemetery there is a separate cemetery for slaves and tenant families southeast of the Young-Nall House. This large cemetery contains over fifty-five graves with death dates ranging from 1846 to 1927.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Young-Nall House is an excellent example of the evolutionary character of early plantation houses that resulted from functional requirements and improved economic circumstances. Both regional vernacular and high style architectural character are reflected in the original (middle) and later Greek Revival (west) sections of the house.
2. Condition of fabric: The house is in fair to good condition overall.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house, consisting of three major sections organized in a linear manner, is 52'-4" wide and 113'-0" long. In the following descriptive narrative the house is divided into these three components: the west (Greek Revival, front), the middle (original house), and the east (rear) section.

The principal elevation of the west section is five bays wide and 1-1/2 stories tall, with a crawlspace throughout. This section measures 52'-4" wide by 44'-6" long. The original middle section is a double pen structure 32'-2" wide by 18'-4" deep, while the east addition is a series of single rooms 16'-2" wide by 34'-3" long.

2. Foundations: With the exception of a full brick foundation wall along the west elevation, the foundations consist of low brick piers of varying size supporting wood timber sills.
3. Walls: Clapboard siding is used on all three sections of the house. The west section has clapboard ranging from 4-3/4" to 5-3/4" exposure, with 5" cornerboards and a 10-1/2" sill board. The clapboard of the middle section averages 5-3/4" of exposure with 3-1/2" cornerboards. The east (rear) section has clapboards of 4-1/2" exposure and no cornerboards. The last addition to the rear section utilizes board and batten siding, 2' on center.
4. Structural system, framing: Heavy timber post and beam.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The front (west) elevation has a projecting four pillar Greek

Revival portico with a pediment. This portico is centered on the house and is approximately 1/3 of the overall house width. The portico floor consists of 6-1/2" wood planks and supports two pairs of square pillars 14-1/2" at the base and tapering upwards. There are matching pilasters on the house wall, between which is flush plank siding 11" wide, with a sill at the base. Handrails with turned spindles and a beaded lower rail are found on each side as well as between the pairs of pillars.

Between the west and middle sections of the house is a breezeway. While some of the original lattice work still exists on the north side, the south side has been extended and screened. A bathroom was added within this area as well. The breezeway has a wood plank floor and ceiling. Part of the ceiling is constructed of beaded boards (north side).

6. Chimneys: The west section of the house has two external brick chimneys each side (north and south). All have corbelled bases and shoulders with the exception of the northeast room chimney. This chimney does not have a corbel base and the shoulders are sloped concrete. All chimney stacks have been rebuilt and fit with sheet metal flashing and stacks.

The north chimney of the middle section has been removed, while that on the south side has been rebuilt and has concrete shoulders and no corbel base. The east (rear) section of the house has a square brick stove flue on the north side.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance door consists of four panel double doors, each 2'-6" x 8'-11". Flanking the doors are eight pane glass sidelites and over the doors and sidelites a nine pane glass transom. The surround is a shouldered architrave consisting of a flat board and outer trim strip. The lintel has a slight pediment shape. Screen doors give access to the breezeway connection between the west and middle sections of the house, while a contemporary 20th century door is used at the east (rear) entrance.
- b. Windows and shutters: The windows of the west section are 6-over-6 light double-hung sash with four panel operable louver shutters. They have a flat board surround 5-1/2" wide with a projecting drip moulding. The rear dormer

window of this section of the house has a 1-over-1 light double-hung sash.

The windows of the middle section of the house are 9-over-9 light double hung sash on the first floor with flat 3-1/2" frames that have a small moulding around the outer edge. On the second floor the windows are 1-over-1 light aluminum frame storm sash.

The rear section windows are 6-over-6 light double-hung sash in the south wall as well as the connection with the middle section. These have a 5-1/2" wide flat board surround. Also in this section are two four light sash that slide up into the wall. These are located in the north wall. The shed addition at the east end has 2-over-2 horizontal light double-hung sash with 2" aluminum moulding trim. A rectangular louvered vent also exists in the attic space.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The west section of the house has a tall asphalt shingle hipped roof with a projecting gable over the front portico. The connection with the middle section of the house has a combination cross gable and semi-hipped roof, while the middle section has a gable roof. The rear section of the house has a gable roof, with a cross gable connection to the middle section and a shed roof over the last rear addition. All sections have asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The west section has a full cornice around the entire section, the eave line broken only by the chimneys. The middle section has slightly projecting box eaves with short returns and flush gable ends. The rear section has projecting eaves with returns and projecting gable ends
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There is one long narrow gable roofed dormer on the rear (east side of the west section's hipped roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The west section is a full Georgian plan with a wide central hall flanked

by pairs of rooms. Connected by a breezeway is the middle (original) section of the house which is one room deep and two rooms wide. A single room connection joins the east section of the house which consists of a single room with a later enclosed porch addition.

- b. Second floor: This floor consists of a single room in the tall hipped roof of the west section that is reached by a steep stairway from the center hall. While this room is framed by studs, only the baseboard remains of any finish work. A single unfinished room is found above the middle section, reached by a steep stairway from the breezeway.
- 2. Stairways: The stairway in the west section consists of a short winder and straight run of 20 risers (8-1/2" to 9" high) and 19 treads (10" wide) with no railings. The stairway in the middle section consists of a straight run of 15 risers (9" high) and 14 treads (11-1/2" wide). This also has no railing.
 - 3. Flooring: West Section: Particle board floors have been installed in the northeast and northwest rooms while 6" wood planks remain in the central hall, southeast and southwest rooms. The second floor room has a wood plank floor with planks ranging in size from 10" to 11". The floors of the middle section first floor rooms consists of 6" to 6-1/2" wood planks, while on the second floor there are 10-1/2" to 11-1/2" wood planks. In the east section the floors are covered with linoleum.
 - 4. Wall and ceiling finish:
 - a. West Section: Plywood now covers all walls of this section of the house. All ceilings are plywood with the exception of the southeast room where imitation wood beams have been installed over a flush wood plank ceiling. The central hallway has had two sets of posts and beams added, apparently for structural purposes. The second floor room originally had lath and plaster walls and ceiling with beaded baseboards. Only the baseboards survive.
 - b. Middle Section: The breezeway has a variety of wall finishes as a result of numerous changes and additions. Lattice exists on the north wall and wood clapboard and planks elsewhere. The ceiling has flush and beaded planks as well as areas of exposed rafters. The middle

sections first floor walls consist of plaster covered with vinyl wallpaper above a wood panel wainscot. A small pantry has been added in the wall between the two rooms. The ceilings are flush wood plank, approximately 3" wide. On the second floor, the kneewalls and ceiling are unfinished.

- c. East Section: The transition room to this section has 3-1/2" tongue-and-groove wood walls and ceiling. The main room of the east section has imitation wood panelling and a tongue-and-groove wood ceiling, while the enclosed porch has imitation wood panel walls and an acoustical tile ceiling.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The interior doors of the west section are of a four panel design, grained to imitate golden oak. They are 3'-3" x 7'-6" and have an 8" frame. The doors of the middle section are a six panel design, raised on one side and are 3'-0-3/4" x 6'-6". They have a 4" frame.
- b. Windows: Windows of the west section are 3'-4" x 7'-11" with an 11" frame. The windows have decorative wood panels below them, with the window frame extending to the floor. The windows of the middle section are 2'-4" x 5'-6" with 4" wood trim.

6. Decorative features and trim: The principal decorative features of the west section include three mid-19th century mantles of simple vernacular design and elaborate door and window surrounds consisting of shouldered architraves with slightly pedimented lintels. The doors were grained and the windows have decorative wood panel dados below the sill. The middle section has wood panel wainscot in both rooms.

7. Hardware: The hardware throughout the house is nearly totally contemporary 20th century with the exception of a porcelain doorknobs and small lock boxes. In the west section several of the original keyholes still can be found in the doors.

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The only existing source of heating consists of four fireplaces in the west section, one

(formerly two) fireplace in the middle section, and a flue for a stove in the east section.

- b. Lighting: The house is fully wired for ceiling lights and wall receptacles.
- c. Plumbing: Two bathrooms, one in the northeast room of the west section and one in the breezeway, have been added as has a kitchen sink in the east section.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The Young-Nall House sits on a low rise and is oriented towards the west, facing Berry Lake Road. It is set back approximately 30 meters and is approached via an unpaved drive to the south.
- 2. Historic landscape design: No significant formal historic landscape planting was noted. Foundation plantings include numerous young shrubs and flowers as well as several mature shrubs. Trees have been added in the lawn to the west of the house in an apparently random manner. More mature trees surround the house site.
- 3. Outbuildings: Many of the outbuildings associated with the house were demolished as they became dilapidated. Still existing are a clapboard sided smokehouse of 20th century construction. This is located to the southeast of the rear of the house. Further to the east is a wind powered water pump and well house. In dilapidated condition is a small servant or tenant house, located 40 to 50 meters to the east and south of the house.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: None located.
- B. Early Views: One photograph of the west section of the Young-Nall House taken c1900 was located.
- C. Interviews:

Barfield, Mrs. Beri. Marion, Alabama. August 21, 1983.

Shreiner, Mrs. Charles. Burkville, Alabama. August 19, 1983.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Alabama State Census 1855. Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Lowndes County Deed, Inventory, Marriage, Minute and Will Records 1830-1983. Lowndes County Courthouse, Hayneville, Alabama.

United States Census Records, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860.

E. Supplemental Material: Additional historical/genealogical information on file with The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology, Inc., Nashville, Tn.

Prepared by: Michael Emrick, Historical Architect,
and Philip Thomason, Architectural
Historian
The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology
August - September 1983

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project was conducted by The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology, of Nashville, Tennessee under contract from Environmental Research and Technology, Inc. for General Electric - Montgomery Project, Burkville, Alabama.

Project personnel included Michael Emrick, Project Architect (project coordination, architectural data); James Thompson, Architect (measured drawings and sketch plans); Philip Thomason, project historian; and Barry Starkey, photographer. Agency involvement included the Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service.